

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**MAY 12, 2021
5:00 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Sara Hannan, Chair
Senator Lora Reinbold, Vice Chair
Representative Matt Claman
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Neal Foster
Representative Louise Stutes
Representative Cathy Tilton
Representative Chris Tuck
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Peter Micciche
Senator Mike Shower
Senator Bert Stedman
Senator Gary Stevens

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator Shelley Hughes (alternate)

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Senators Kiehl, Wilson; Representatives McCabe, Merrick

AGENDA

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
COMMITTEE BUSINESS
CONTRACT APPROVALS

SPEAKER REGISTER

Jessica Geary, Executive Director, Legislative Affairs
Agency (LAA)
Tim Banaszak, Information Technology Manager, LAA

[5:04:12 PM](#)

I. CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR HANNAN called the Legislative Council meeting to order at 5:05pm in the House Finance Committee Room. Present at the call were: Representatives Edgmon, Hannan, Stutes, Tilton, Tuck; Senators Bishop, Micciche, Reinbold, Shower, Stedman, Stevens.

Members absent were: Representatives Claman, Foster; Senator Hoffman.

Eleven members present.

Representative Foster joined the meeting at 5:08pm and Representative Claman joined at 5:10pm.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

[5:05:12 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR REINBOLD moved and asked unanimous consent that Legislative Council approve the agenda as presented.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON objected and stated that the Chair had indicted there would be a future meeting, but asked, before this agenda is approved, when they would have a meeting to receive an update from the COVID-19 policy work group.

CHAIR HANNAN responded that Ms. Geary addressed the COVID-19 policy working group about changes in testing and screening. She asked Ms. Geary if there were any other changes from that committee that were not reported out already in writing.

JESSICA GEARY responded there were not, however the committee has not met again.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON said that was her question—when will there be a meeting regarding these policies?

CHAIR HANNAN said so the first question was the workgroup, which did their task and is done. The second question—when there is enough time, energy, and votes to have a meeting to conclude that, which she suspects will not happen between now and day 121.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON said she thought the policies put forward by the workgroup were going to be discussed amongst the Legislature as a whole and adopted by the Legislative Council.

CHAIR HANNAN said to clarify, there are a number of Legislative Council items that need to be dealt with. This meeting is only addressing things with a time sensitive nature... contract expenditures with a deadline this month and some contracts to be executed (a lease, and two IT items). The remainder of pending items will be taken up when there is time for a longer meeting.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON followed up to her objection and said she is just seeking a time for the opportunity to ratify those decisions made by the work group and have further COVID-19 policy discussions. She said she understands that timing is of the essence but believes there are things within the work group that are of essence as well on this policy regarding the amount of vaccination that is happening throughout this building, which is why she is asking.

CHAIR HANNAN responded that she is not trying to be evasive but knows that the next meeting will require a significant amount of time and she does not foresee finding time when the majority of members can be present. The three items before Council today are very specific and short timeframes in which Council must respond; that is the reason they are being dealt with separately.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON thanked the Chair and said as time is of the essence and the Legislature is close to 121 days, she understood and removed her objection.

SENATOR SHOWER objected to the motion and said he has been asking for months for a chance to discuss the current policy and the money approved to continue it. A small group of people have had a chance to discuss it, but the broader Council has not, and it affects everyone. He removed his objection, but said he is putting it on the record that there are those who would like to have the chance to discuss the policy. Thank you.

CHAIR HANNAN said seeing no further objections, the motion is approved.

III. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

A. FY22 ANNUAL COMPUTER HARDWARE REFRESH

[5:10:21 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR REINBOLD moved that the Legislative Council approve FY22 hardware refresh expenditure of \$152,350.

CHAIR HANNAN objected for purposes of discussion and asked Tim Banaszak to please come forward and explain this issue.

TIM BANASZAK, Information Technology Manager for the Legislature, said before you is the hardware refresh memo. Part of the reason this needs to be addressed now is that supply chains are tightening, computer equipment costs are going up, and to meet any attempt at FY22 interim hardware refresh upgrades, IT needs to try to get this equipment in and underway.

Mr. Banaszak noted that there is a very active, engaged, and well-attended IT Subcommittee and thanked Chair Hannan for appointing it. That Subcommittee has reviewed these two requests, including the hardware refresh which consists of seventy-five laptop workstations, ten laser printers, ninety-five monitors, for a total of \$152,350.

This hardware refresh is based on a five-year computer refresh cycle, related to the age of equipment, upkeep costs, performance, and obsolescence. It is also consistent with the Three-Year Technology Plan that Council has and standardizes a single printer make and model to reduce toner cartridge and maintenance costs. It also assigns one printer in the Capitol office, so shipping back and forth is not necessary, which saves costs.

Mr. Banaszak continued that the other important thing to note is this request, for the first time, does not include any desktop workstation computers, only laptops. That is important during COVID-19 and post-COVID since employees are working in a new environment where instead of having a desktop and a laptop, now they can just pick up their laptop and go wherever necessary.

He said finally, it is important to know this has been vetted through procurement for best, government pricing, so the Legislature is getting the best buy at discount pricing. He said he is happy to answer any questions.

SENATOR REINBOLD offered thanks to Mr. Banaszak. She said her office had to call the Help Desk quite a bit this session and has had excellent support. Her staff enjoyed serving on the IT Subcommittee, but even during the hard time when the line was clipped or the disruption, IT did an excellent job. She said she is extremely supportive of this.

SENATOR BISHOP said it has been some time since he heard this in Senate Finance, but he believed there was over a million dollars' worth of computers bought through the Department of Administration for remote work for State employees. As those employees come back into the building, he believes the Governor is moving toward that direction, has Mr. Banaszak had any cross-pollination talks with DOA and what do they plan on doing with the million dollars' worth of computers they purchased? Is there any way the Legislature could get a sweetheart deal going forward? Not wanting to stop anything we are doing here, Madame Chair, but it is a legitimate question if the Legislature could re-purpose some of those computers. Thank you.

MR. BANASZAK responded that the contract the Legislature used was developed through the Executive and Legislative branches and, as a result, takes advantage of volume discounts. He said that he and the heads of IT for the Executive and Judicial branches meet once per month to discuss IT initiatives, cost savings, how to take advantage of the three branches of government and discounts and repurpose hardware. With some of the situations going on now, each branch is very much helping each other. The funding for most of this comes from the same barrel of oil—we try to be good stewards of our assets and are all serving the public. So absolutely Senator Bishop, good point. Specifically, about repurposing, if there is equipment available, in trying to be good stewards, there is no equipment being pulled out or sent away, the Legislature reuses its equipment, but cannot budget for both a desktop and a laptop computer.

CHAIR HANNAN said that recently the Court System had some technology problems and Legislative Affairs was able to accommodate the Court System using the Anchorage LIO location to run their payroll without the risk of being hacked. There is a lot of behind-the-scenes collaboration—the Legislature was not at risk in assisting them in running their payroll—so the Court system was shut down, but not unemployed.

SENATOR STEVENS asked Mr. Banaszak to please explain the five-year computer refresh cycle. Does that mean in the period of five years the Legislature will replace all equipment?

MR. BANASZAK said ideally, yes, each legislator and staffer's primary computer should handle the latest software, the latest operating system, and work reasonably well. The legislature also must keep our equipment, especially now, so the intent is by the time these are getting into the five-year range, they will start slowing down and IT does not want that impacting productivity. Older computers are used for lower uses or become spares for emergency use. For example, IT recently pulled a lot of spare laptops and portable equipment to respond to COVID-19; unfortunately, several staff had to use slower, older computers, but at least they could get online.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON asked if Mr. Banaszak could offer a brief update on the Three-Year Technology plan.

MR. BANASZAK responded that in 2008, he may need to confirm the year, the Legislative Council thought it was prudent to have a Three-Year Technology plan. He said it is an opportunity—the current plan expires in calendar 2021 and will soon need updating. That is drafted through the IT Subcommittee, then brought to the full Council for adoption. Primarily, the plan looks at current priority issues that face the Legislature and things it will need to respond to. Secondly, it considers the business drivers that the Legislature faces, for example: financial systems, the current COVID-19 response—a technology and paradigm shift to go from desktop computers to refreshing with laptops, and electronic and remote voting systems. It is an opportunity for that one to three year plan so that when IT brings requests forward like this, it has not just reacted to something individually, but is an IT roadmap that gets refreshed.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON said she has not had an opportunity to review the Legislature's technology budget and is asking if these items fall within the budget allotment that we have for these items.

MR. BANASZAK said that is a very important point. Both requests before Council today are annual recurring expenses and have been right at \$150,000, sometimes slightly more, never less. The last ten years have been consistent amounts. The hardware refresh request is from capital

funds, so it is an equipment line item and is almost to the dollar of what we spend every year.

CHAIR HANNAN asked that the minutes reflect that Representative Foster joined the meeting at 5:08pm and Representative Claman joined at 5:10pm. She asked if there were questions from other members then restated the motion to approve the FY22 hardware refresh expenditure of \$152,350.

[5:22:23 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Representatives Claman, Edgmon, Foster, Hannan, Stutes, Tilton, Tuck; Senators Bishop, Micciche, Reinbold, Shower, Stedman, Stevens.

NAYS: None

The motion passed 13-0.

B. FY22 MICROSOFT ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE RENEWAL

[5:23:09 PM](#)

SENATOR REINBOLD moved that the Legislative Council authorize the IT Subcommittee recommendation for the Microsoft FY22 licensing payment to SHI not to exceed \$175,000.

CHAIR HANNAN objected for the purpose of discussion and asked Mr. Banaszak to speak to this item.

MR. BANASZAK said as was noted, this is a software request, whereas the last item was a hardware request. This annual payment is due July 1, 2021.

He said that in 2018, Legislative Council approved the first installment of the State of Alaska's three-year contract with extension provisions with Software House International (SHI). This contract provides Microsoft products, including Windows 10, Windows server operating systems, and the Office software suite (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Skype for Business, OneNote, Publisher, and Teams).

This agreement also provides licensing to operate critical infrastructure and systems, including Windows 10 PC/OS, Windows Server, SQL databases including BASIS, network storage (N drives), SharePoint, and web servers, including

www.akleg.gov and the Intranet. Part of the contract includes secure email, archiving, and protected OneDrive file sharing, software licensing, and collaboration for mobile devices. Further, the agreement provides video and audio conferencing tools using Microsoft Teams. Finally, it safeguards applications, operating systems, and databases by providing the most current security updates and software versioning.

This renewal, which begins July 1, 2021, provides the benefits of reduced-volume pricing, enhanced technical support, regular software upgrades, and training for technical and non-technical staff. The IT Subcommittee has reviewed the renewal and recommends Legislative Council approve this request.

The Legislature's portion of the agreement for FY2022 is estimated to be \$175,000, which is budgeted under the Administrative Services allocation and requires Legislative Council approval. If this request were not approved, the Legislature would no longer have access to email, Microsoft Office software, and leave critical infrastructure systems exposed to internet malware. Mr. Banaszak said he is happy to answer any questions.

SENATOR REINBOLD said her staff is on the Subcommittee and really enjoys the technical work, so she will support the motion, however, does not care for Microsoft products. She said this is something the Subcommittee is working on with the phone system, and she prefers not to have all the eggs in one basket. She said that is a topic for another day and has expressed her concerns with Mr. Banaszak. With that, she will support this motion.

SENATOR STEVENS said there has been discussion, with nothing yet decided, about remote meetings of committees—not on the floor—but the Legislature has a lot yet to accomplish and solve due to COVID-19. He asked if this puts the Legislature in a position to be able to accommodate remote committee meetings or is it already in that position.

MR. BANASZAK responded that in Senator Stevens' previous role as Council Chair, the Legislature started building capability to have remote meetings. Some of that capability is built into the existing system, some relies on the licensing before Council today for the operating systems, servers, Teams, video conferencing, and our BASIS system. For a member to vote in committee remotely, that is part of

this system. This is not everything, but it is a big part of that infrastructure framework. IT staff continue work to build it out, but the remote committee capability relies heavily on this renewal, and we are looking at expanding some of the software capabilities to better support remote committees.

SENATOR REINBOLD offered one more compliment. She said she was one of the first people, as Judiciary Chair, to use the big screen and was able to remote in so many cool people which made the committee much better, so thank you for that. She said that State Affairs has done a super good job helping work remotely as well. She continued that with her concern with Alaska Airlines she is more interested than ever in what Senators Shower and Stevens have proposed working remotely so this absolutely has her support sooner rather than later and hopes operating remotely can be on the next agenda.

CHAIR HANNAN removed her objection and reprised the motion to authorize the IT Subcommittee recommendation for the Microsoft FY22 licensing payment to SHI not to exceed \$175,000.

[5:30:29 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Representatives Claman, Edgmon, Foster, Hannan, Stutes, Tilton, Tuck; Senators Bishop, Micciche, Reinbold, Shower, Stedman, Stevens.

NAYS: None

The motion passed 13-0.

IV. CONTRACT APPROVAL

Chair Hannan explained this item will require an Executive Session to discuss RFP 643 for the Bethel LIO. After review during Executive Session, Council will come back to the full public session and act on a decision on the RFP.

SENATOR REINBOLD moved that Legislative Council go into executive session under Uniform Rule 22(b)(1) and (3), discussion of matters, the immediate knowledge of which would adversely affect the finances of a government unit and discussion of a matter that may, by law, be required to be confidential. The following individuals can remain in the room or online: Jessica Geary, Santé Lesh, Molly

Kiesel, JC Kestel, Tim Powers, Megan Wallace, Emily Nauman, legislators not on Legislative Council, and any staff of a Legislative Council member.

[5:32:20 PM.](#)

Council went into Executive Session at 5:32pm.

[5:49:06 PM](#)

Council came out of Executive Session at 5:49pm.

SENATOR REINBOLD moved that Legislative Council approve the award of RFP 643 for the Bethel Office Space to Bethel Native Corporation Suites 214 and 215 for a five year lease and a five year optional one year renewal.

CHAIR HANNAN asked if there was any objection. Hearing none a roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Representatives Claman, Edgmon, Foster, Hannan, Stutes, Tilton, Tuck; Senators Bishop, Micciche, Reinbold, Shower, Stedman, Stevens.

NAYS: None

The motion passed 13-0.

V. ADJOURN

CHAIR HANNAN said if there is nothing further to come before Council, we are adjourned at 5:50pm.

[5:50:41 PM](#)